2009

The Effect of Emotional State on Inadvertent Plagiarism Memory Errors

Amanda C. Gingerich
Butler University, mgingeri@butler.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.butler.edu/facsch_papers
Part of the Educational Psychology Commons, and the Psychology Commons

Recommended Citation

This Presentation is brought to you for free and open access by the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences at Digital Commons @ Butler University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Scholarship and Professional Work - LAS by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Butler University. For more information, please contact omacisaa@butler.edu.
The Effect of Emotional State on Inadvertent Plagiarism Memory Errors
Amanda C. G. Hege
Butler University

Abstract
We investigated inadvertent plagiarism by inducing participants into a happy or sad mood before they generated items in a puzzle task. Compared to happy mood, participants induced into a sad mood made fewer memory errors in which they claimed a previously-generated idea to be new; confidence ratings in these errors, however, was higher.

Method
Participants: 40 University of Virginia undergraduate students (20 Happy Mood and 20 Sad Mood)
Procedure: Participants took turns with a computer player generating solutions to six Boggle-type puzzles in the Initial Generation (IG) phase. Then, in the Generate-New task, participants were instructed to generate new solutions to each puzzle that were presented neither by themselves nor by the computer player during Initial Generation. Participants were induced into a happy or sad mood by writing about a happy or sad personal event for 10 minutes before Initial Generation.

Results
As predicted by the affect-as-information hypothesis, compared to those in a happy mood, those in a sad mood showed a lower proportion of partner-plagiarism and self-plagiarism errors.

Conclusions
Participants induced into a happy mood mistakenly claimed items to be new when, in fact, they were originally generated by the computer partner (partner-plagiarism errors) or by themselves (self-plagiarism errors) more so than did those induced into a sad mood. This suggests that item-specific processing accompanies a sad mood, resulting in fewer memory errors and an inflated sense of memory accuracy.

References

Acknowledgements
Many thanks to Cari Day, Amanda Miller, and Michael Patrizio for their assistance with data collection and analysis and to Jonathan Emmons for his invaluable programming skills.